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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

119

27 July 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Allan Evans (OIR)
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SUBJECT : SNIE 11-8-54: Probable Warning of Soviet
Attack on the US as of Mid-1957

1. The attached terms of reference, indicating the allocations of production responsibility, were agreed on at the meeting of the IAC representatives on 23 July.

2. It is requested that contributions be received in this office by the close of business on 13 August.

Paul A. Borel
PAUL A. BOREL
Deputy Assistant Director
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Distribution "B"

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

27 July 1954

SUBJECT: TERMS OF REFERENCE: SNIE 11-8-54: PROBABLE WARNING OF
SOVIET ATTACK ON THE US THROUGH MID-1957*

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the probable degree of advance warning that would be provided by intelligence in the event of Soviet attacks on the United States and key US installations overseas through mid-1957.

ASSUMPTION

The Soviet attack on the US and key US overseas installations would be on the general scale described in SNIE 11-7-54.

SCOPE

Since a Soviet attack on the US would be tantamount to general war, this estimate must cover the over-all problem of the likely warning the US would receive of Soviet initiation of general war, of which a Soviet attack on the continental US would be only a part. At the same time, however, we must consider the possibility that if the USSR placed overriding priority on a surprise attack on the continental

* When the contributions are received they will be referred to appropriate collection agencies for comment.

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US, it might seek surprise by attempting to initiate such an attack without first undertaking such discernible preparations for general war as would increase the likelihood of our receiving advance warning.

OIR

I. WARNING FROM SOVIET BEHAVIOR

In the light of our current estimates (SNIE 11-54 and SNIE 11-5-54) of probable Soviet intentions with respect to general war, to what extent is the US likely to receive any degree of warning from Soviet behavior in a period of heightened political tensions prior to a Soviet attack? From Soviet behavior in the absence of a period of heightened political tensions? What prior political actions, if any, would the USSR be likely to undertake?

DEFENSE
and
NIC

II. ASSUMING A SOVIET DECISION TO LAUNCH A FULL-SCALE ATTACK ON THE WEST, WHAT WARNING WOULD BE LIKELY TO BE RECEIVED

- A. In general, what prior preparations would the Bloc have to make for a full-scale attack? What indications of such preparations would the US be likely to receive?
- B. What specific preparations would the USSR have to make for the scale of attack on the US and key US overseas installations outlined in SNIE 11-7-54? What specific indications of such preparations would the US be likely to receive?

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III. ASSUMING A SOVIET DECISION TO LAUNCH A SURPRISE ATTACK, WHAT WARNING WOULD THE US PROBABLY RECEIVE

DEFENSE

A. What limitations on the scale of its attack would the USSR probably have to accept, if it were to attempt to achieve maximum surprise: (1) In attack on the US; (2) In attack on the US and key US installations overseas; (3) In other general war campaigns?

DEFENSE

B. What would be the minimum preparations which the USSR would probably feel compelled to undertake?

1. For attack on the US?
2. For attack on key US installations overseas?
3. For other general war campaigns?

DEFENSE
and
NIC

C. What warning could the US expect to receive?

1. If USSR mounted a surprise attack on the US and key US overseas installations alone?
2. If USSR mounted a surprise attack including such other general war campaigns as would be consistent with A. above?

OIR
DEFENSE

IV. WHAT FACTORS WOULD TEND TO DETERMINE THE SOVIET DECISION BETWEEN COURSES II AND III ABOVE

A. To what extent would the way in which war came about (as discussed under I. above) affect the Soviet decision between courses II. and III. above?

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B. In view of the probable strengths, weaknesses, and dispositions of Soviet forces through 1957, to what extent would the limitations which the USSR would have to accept on the scale of its attack (and the consequent degree of success it would expect) influence its decision?

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